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DE RUEHBS #3233 2981216

ZNY CCCCC ZZH

P 251216Z OCT 07

FM USEU BRUSSELS

TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/25/2017

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SUBJECT: EU DISCUSSES BURMESE PARTICIPATION IN EU-ASEAN SUMMIT

REF: STATE 148528

Classified By: Deputy Pol Chief Alyce Tidball for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶11. (C) In response to reftel points, EU Council and Commission officials said that Burma will feature high on the agenda for the EU-ASEAN Summit on November 22. In fact, the issue is taking prominence in nearly every aspect of the EU's external relations, and will likely be broached with Russia at their summit meeting on October 26, will be a topic on the EU-Africa summit agenda as part of an expanded human rights dialogue with African countries, and will be discussed during summits with China and India, also in November. Council Burma rep Friederike Tschampa added that the EU is preparing to deliver a new round of demarches on Burma and is specifically targeting ASEAN capitals as well as Moscow, New Delhi, and Beijing. The EU continues to emphasize their support for Gambari's efforts and press ASEAN and neighboring countries to do more to pressure the regime.

¶12. (C) Tschampa and Commission Southeast Asia officials Seamus Gillespie and Andreas List said that no final decision has been taken on the attendance arrangements for the EU-ASEAN Summit. Tschampa explained that ASEAN Chair Singapore, has recommended that the Acting Burmese Prime Minister attend. Member states have not reached agreement on whether they will alter their level of participation, however, and may find themselves further constrained by some who could draw an analogy to the EU's decision to include Mugabe in their Africa summit. One option still on the table would be to hold the summit in a loose troika format, with the EU represented by Commission President Barroso and Portuguese Prime Minister Socrates. The ASEAN side would likely be represented by the ASEAN Secretariat, Singapore, and Cambodia, thereby avoiding Burmese attendance or potential member state boycotts. Gillespie admitted that if the summit went ahead with full EU and Burmese participation, it would at least provide an opportunity for the EU to exert some pressure on Burma directly.

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